

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An isolated L-leucine producing bacterium belonging to the genus *Escherichia*, ~~which~~ which produces L-leucine, L-valine, L-isoleucine and L-homoleucine, wherein the amount of L-valine, L-isoleucine, and L-homoleucine produced is in an amount of less than 1% of that of L-leucine produced, due to inactivation of *ilvE* gene or decreasing activity of the protein encoded by *ilvE* gene.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The bacterium according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, wherein the activity of the protein coded by *tyrB* gene of *Escherichia coli* is increased by increasing a copy number of said *tyrB* gene or by locating said *tyrB* gene under control of a potent promoter.

4. (Currently Amended) The bacterium according to claim 3, wherein the activity of the protein coded by said *tyrB* gene is increased by transformation of the bacterium with a DNA containing said *tyrB* gene to increase the copy number of the DNA containing said *tyrB* gene.

5. (Original) The bacterium according to claim 4, wherein the bacterium is transformed using a multicopy vector.

6. (Withdrawn; Currently Amended) A method for producing the L-leucine, which method comprises the steps of:

- cultivating the bacterium according to ~~any of claim 1 to 5~~ claim 1 in a medium to

produce and accumulate the L-leucine in the medium, and

- collecting the L-leucine from the medium.

7. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 6, wherein the bacterium has been modified to have enhanced expression of a gene of L-leucine biosynthesis.

8. (New) The bacterium according to claim 1, wherein the bacterium is *Escherichia coli* strain 505 which has been deposited in the Russian National Collection of Industrial Microorganisms under accession numbers VKPM B-8124.

9. (New) The bacterium according to claim 8, wherein the activity of the protein coded by *tyrB* gene of *Escherichia coli* is increased by increasing a copy number of said *tyrB* gene or by locating said *tyrB* gene under control of a potent promoter.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

Claim 2 has been canceled.

Claims 1, 3, 4, and 6 have been amended.

Claims 8 and 9 have been added.

The amendment of Claim 1 is supported by original Claims 1 and 2. The amendment of Claims 3 and 4 and the introduction of new Claim 9 is supported by page 10, line 17 to page 11, line 15. The amendment of Claim 6 is supported by original Claim 6. New Claim 8 is supported by page 16, line 24 to page 17, line 2.

No new matter has been introduced by the present amendment.